

國立澎湖科技大學應用外語系

英文實務專題

The Anxiety and Attitude of English Majored  
University Students toward Graduation Research  
Project (GRP)

英語系大學生對於畢業專題研究的態度及焦慮感之  
探索

學生姓名： 蕭唯中 1105402001  
林楷喻 1105402015  
凌鴻宇 1105402026  
楊興苗 1105402057

指導老師： 藍恩明 / John Lan 教授

中華民國一〇八年十二月六日

# Table of Contents

Abstract. ....	4
Table of Contents .....	2
List of Tables. ....	3
Chapter One Introduction .....	4
1.1 Background. ....	4
1.2 Significance of the Study .....	5
1.3 Purpose of the Study .....	5
1.4 Research Questions.....	6
Chapter Two Literature Review. ....	6
2.1 Learning Anxiety .....	6
2.2 Importance of Anxiety for EFL learners.....	7
2.2.1 Effects of Anxiety in EFL learning.....	8
2.3 Anxiety in Reading .....	9
2.4 Anxiety in Speaking.....	9
2.5 Anxiety Related Teachers.....	10
Chapter Three Methodology .....	10
3.1 Participants .....	10
3.2 Instruments .....	11
3.3 Study Procedure .....	11
3.4 Data Analysis .....	12
Chapter Four Result and Discussion .....	12
4.1 Analysis of research question 1 .....	13
4.2 Analysis of research question 2.....	15
4.3 Interview Result.....	17
Chapter Five Conclusion.....	19
5.1 Pedagogical Implications.....	20
5.2 Limitations of the Study .....	21
5.3 Suggestions for Future Research .....	21
English References.....	22
Chinese Reference .....	27
Appendix A: (Background Information) .....	28

Appendix B: (Questionnaire for Anxiety and Attitude) .....29  
Appendix C: (Interview Question) .....31

## List of Figures

Figure 1 Study Procedures .....12  
Figure 2 Student Anxiety toward Face-to-Face Talk with Project Instructor  
.....13  
Figure 3 Student Anxiety toward Instructor’s Unclear Ideas and Instructions  
.....13  
Figure 4 Student Anxiety toward the Inability to Find International Journals.  
.....14  
Figure 5 Student Anxiety toward the Inability to Organize Information.....14  
Figure 6 Student Anxiety toward Upcoming Speech.....15  
Figure 7 Student Anxiety during a Presentation. ....15  
Figure 8 Student Attitude toward Instructor Aid .....16  
Figure 9 Student Attitude toward Their Improvements .....16  
Figure 10 Student Attitude toward the Training Course .....16

## Abstract

One of the skills deemed important in the academic program of the Department of Applied Foreign Languages (AFL) at National Penghu University of Science and Technology is the ability to conduct research and presentations. All AFL students use English as a second or third language and they have been learning English as part of their education since primary school onwards. Despite this long engagement with English, students are still experiencing anxiety while engaging in oral presentations, including collecting data, communicating with teachers, and etc. The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors that caused student anxiety and their attitudes toward the graduation research project (GRP) learning process. 39 participants are senior students recruited from the AFL department. The findings show that the majority of students felt anxious when the teacher's work instructions and ideas was not clear, and the minority of students felt anxious when the teacher used English to discuss the topics. Furthermore, the majority of students, when confused, would ask the instructor for help as much as possible. Second, for research tasks, we discovered that due to the lack of English vocabularies, most students had extremely high anxiety when they searched for international journals. Third, the majority of students get anxious before making a speech. In terms of student attitude, we found that the majority of the students think that they have improved their research and language after the training course and practices.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background

There is a variety of type of anxiety for learning. Spielberger (1983) described anxiety as "the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system. Moreover, Scovel (1978) claimed that anxiety is associated with feelings of uneasiness, frustration, self-doubt, apprehension, or worry. In addition, there are four types of anxiety. First, *global trait anxiety* is a more permanent predisposition to be anxious. Some people are predictably and generally anxious about many things in the real world. Second, *state anxiety* is experienced in relation to some particular event or act at a more momentary, or situational level. Third, *debilitative anxiety* or harmful anxiety. It describes the possibility which is characterized with a fear of failure and lack of confidence to succeed. Fourth, *facilitative anxiety* is helpful and it describes the possibility beneficial effects when you learn foreign language. It is characterized by confidence that one can succeed if making an effort.

Besides the definition and category, there are many factors leading to learning anxiety in graduation research project (GRP). First, Saito et al. (1999) found that the unfamiliar scripts were found to be the major source of foreign language reading anxiety. In the literature searching aspect, due to lack of English ability, learners could not understand foreign journals which led to anxiety. Next, language learners may have a different level of anxiety when learning a language with a less familiar writing system (Pichette, 2009). When writing a project in English, students could not fully express and integrate the results of previous discussions in their writing, which caused anxiety. Last, speaking is the most anxiety-provoking aspect in a second language learning situation (Ellis, 1994; Horwitz et al., 1986; Young, 1991). In the process of discussing the topic with the instructor, due to lack of English oral ability, learners become frightened and anxious when they could not understand what the teacher is saying in English.

### 1.2. Significance of the Study

The importance of language learning anxiety has been under scrutiny by a number of researchers in the past (Gardner, 1985; Dörnyei, 1998; Wen, 2001; Scovel, 1978); Tanveer, 2007). Many past studies have focused on learning anxiety in the aspects of the four basic skills in English (Melvin (2008); Hsu &Tsu-Chia (2011); Saito, Horwitz, & Garza, 1999; Sellers, 2000). However, little to no attention has been paid to the learning anxiety resulting from the GRP. Therefore, this study aims to explore the anxiety and attitude of students toward graduation research project (GRP), hoping to find the solution and coping mechanisms to deal with learning anxiety for language learners. Furthermore, the researchers of this study hope to make contributions to EFL students, instructors and researchers in the future. It is hoped that instructors are able to realize the causes of student anxiety from the findings of this research and modify the methods of instruction. From this research, the researchers also provided suggestions to assist EFL students in how to face and cope with anxiety while doing the GRP. As for future research, although past studies have scarcely taken notice of how GRP anxiety would affect students, the researchers of the present study hope to lay a foundation and provide concrete evidence to pave the path for further in-depth research in anxiety in the learning process of foreign language acquisition. Based on the above, the following purpose of study and research questions guided the study.

### 1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the anxiety and attitude of English majored university students toward graduation research projects.

#### 1.4 Research Question

1. What is the anxiety level of English majored university students toward the instructor, language use, and research tasks during graduation research project (GRP)?
2. What is the attitude of English majored university students toward graduation research project (GRP)?

## **2. Literature review**

### 2.1. Learning Anxiety

In the process of learning second language acquisition, the structure of anxiety plays a major effective role and it is associated with self-assurance, self-efficacy, repression, and risk taking. Spielberger (1983) figured out anxiety as the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system.” Moreover, Scovel (1978) claimed out anxiety as the feeling of suspicion, frustration, insecurity, apprehension, or uneasiness.

Furthermore, Horwitz and Oxford (2001, 1999) claimed anxiety can be experienced at diverse level. First, anxiety is more permanent disposition to be stressed, or global level. Second, at a Momentary situation, state anxiety can be experienced in connection with a particular event or activity. It is crucial for EFL teachers to determine whether students’ state anxiety comes from their trait anxiety or from other particular momentary situations.

MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) claimed that trait anxiety had uncertain and ambiguous definitions; thus, it was not useful to predict second language learning achievements. Not put trait anxiety as a helpful in predicting second language attainment because of its global and kind of uncertainly defined identity. Hence, recent research focused more situational nature of state anxiety.

Apert and Haber (1960); Scovel (1978); Oxford (1999) claimed that knowing the differences between facilitative and debilitating anxiety is important for EFL instructors anxiety. In the past, Spielmann and Radnofsky (2001) found tension as a more neutral opinion to describe the possibility of both “depressed” (detrimental) and “delighted” (beneficial) impact on learning a foreign language. But the notion of facilitative anxiety and delighted maybe considered a positive factor during second language learning. Otherwise, a learner many become wishy-washy and lack the alertness and cannot relax, such as the positive anxiety right before giving a speech or presentation. This anxiety is considered positive because it can help the speaker get the job done.

Some studies have found the advantage of facilitative anxiety in studying foreign language (Spielmann & Radnofsky, 2001; Ehrman & Oxford, 1995; Young, 1992; Horwitz, 1990). Facilitative anxiety was one of the keys to success, the most

important factor is competitiveness reported by (Bailey, 1983). Research on language anxiety has been an argument over whether anxiety is the cause of poor performance or the product of less than satisfactory performance in a second language. Sparks and Ganschow (2001) and Sparks, Ganschow, and Javorsky (2000) and their partner have retained that language anxiety is an outcome of their foreign language studying difficulties. Ganschow (1994); Sparks and Ganschow (1995) found that students may have difficulties with language “codes” (phonological, syntactic, lexical, semantic features). In a set of studies, Spark, Ganschow and their partners have tried to prove their idea on what they call the Linguistic Deficit Coding Hypothesis (LCDH). However, Horwitz (2001) and MacIntyre (1995) were not ready to receive the LCDH explanation, and had a strong disagreement with the validity of the research cited in support of it. Yet they did not go so far as to claim clearly that anxiety is the source of poor language performance, they refused the 'LCDH', expressing that anxiety is a common source of obstruction in all kinds of learning. Some arguments about causes and effects of language anxiety. Spielmann and Radnofsky (2001) found that students of French in Vermont who could “recreate” themselves in their foreign language were able to have more joyful tension. Levine (2003) has found in a study of German as a foreign language that the factor depends on whether students were speaking with other students or with teachers which cause students anxiety. Rodriguez and Abreu (2003) looked at the stability of anxiety which across different foreign languages. Gregersen (2003) looked into the study of native Spanish speakers who learn English with more anxious could make more errors, think that the number of their errors are more important than it really is, and corrected them as more than less anxious learners. Kitano (2001) found that college students in Japan which can cause higher levels of anxiety as they noticed their ability to be lower than others when reporting with greater fear of negative assessment. Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) have made a similar report which linked uneasiness with perfectionism, and suggested that those who set unworkably high standards for themselves were likely to develop greater anxiety. Finally, Bailey, Onwugbuzie and Daley (2000) figure out in their study and also suggested that anxiety was linked to low-perceived, self-worth, competence, and intelligence.

## 2.2 Importance of Anxiety for EFL learners

Anxiety is one of the most prominent and pervasive emotions, which was defined as a feeling of uneasy suspense by Rachman (1998) and has been a focus of research in foreign language education since early 1970s. Over the years, state anxiety, trait anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety have become three mainstream approaches to anxiety research in language teaching and learning (Horwitz & Cope 1986). Gardner

(1985) acknowledged that second/foreign language (SL/FL) anxiety was situation-specific and claimed that individual differences in anxiety contributed to differences in achievement. Moreover, language learning anxiety has also been widely agreed to be an important affective variable influencing SL/FL learning (Gardner, 1985; Dörnyei, 1998; Wen, 2001). Most of the studies on language anxiety reveal that anxiety is the questionable matter toward learning English as a second/foreign language, it influences the students' productive and performance. Scovel (1978) indicated that positive correlations between a reasonable foreign language anxiety and achievement of the learner in the target of language learning. Consideration of learners' anxiety reactions in learning to speak another language by a language teacher is deemed highly important in order to assist them to achieve the intended performance goals in the target language (Tanveer, 2007). On the other hand, Young (1991) pointed out that there are three important phases of anxiety, which in relation with the desire to success construct a great source of hindrance to students' receptivity of a foreign language. First, if a person guarantees success and finds that there is no possibility for success, he will start to have debilitating anxiety and so he will not do his best to succeed. Second, if the person knows that success is not guaranteed but that making a real effort will make him succeed, here anxiety will spur on him and so he may do better. Third, if the learner likes to succeed but feels that no matter hard he tries, he is most likely to fail, then his anxiety makes the matter more difficult.

#### 2.2.1. Effects of Anxiety in EFL learning

Anxiety has both positive and negative effects on EFL learning. Shahi (2016) explored that sometimes language anxiety was a great help for second language learning. In addition, Krashen and Terrell (1983) had the other view point, they considered low anxiety would help language acquisition. Furthermore, there were many research and studies reported that students might have been able to reap the helpfulness from the positive effect of anxiety. For example, Llinás and Garau (2009) laid out that in some level of anxiety learners could bring advantage to achieve their second language learning. Spielmann and Radnofsky (2001) also proved that a certain level of anxiety could cause a facilitate effect on language learners. Although those studies showed the negative experience of foreign language anxiety which students had, there were also reporting that anxiety may have a facilitate effect (Coryell & Clark 2009; Llinás, & Garau, 2009; Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, & Daley, 1999; Spielmann & Radnofsky, 2001).

On the contrary, anxiety has been proven to have negative effects on the achievement in the second language learning (Aida, 1994; MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991b). Zheng (2008) reported that anxiety could result in poor performance in language learning

and could become an awful experience that deeply disturb one's self-esteem or self-confidence as a learner. Elkahafai (2005) found that negative anxiety can impacts EFL learners in four basic skills of language. To be specific, the negative correlations among listening anxiety, listening ability grade, and final course grade were explored and shown significant differences in the results of learner listening performance. Kim (2000) indicated that listening anxiety caused negative effects due to according to the culture or population. In Saudi Arabia, Hamouda (2013) found that students had problems in listening ability due to their high-level of anxiety of uncertain materials and lack of practice. Next, in Taiwan, an extreme correlation between anxiety and speaking test results was also noticed in a study of English majors (Cheng *et al.*, 1999). Similarly, several studies also reported that students were extremely afraid of speaking in public or in front of their classmates, (Daly, 1991; Ewald, 2007; Price, 1991; Wu, 2005; Young, 1990). Finally, writing anxiety in second/foreign language study contexts was also investigated and its negative effect was observed (Cheng, 2002; Cheng *et al.*, 1999). In addition, an adapted Daly and Miller's Second Language Writing Apprehension Test (SLWAT) was used to assess students' writing anxiety. The result indicated that the overall FLCAS and SLWAT were significantly matched.

### 2.3 Anxiety in Reading

There are many factors in the cause of reading anxiety. The concurrence is that reading anxiety indeed negatively affected students reading performance (Lee, 1999; Matsuda & Gobel, 2004; Saito, Horwitz, & Garza, 1999; Sellers, 2000). Saito, Horwitz, & Garza (1999) conducted a study to inspect the reading anxiety of native English speakers learning Japanese, Russian, or French as a foreign language. The results indicated that being unfamiliar with scripts is one of the factors causing high-level anxiety. Hence, Saito et al (1999) concluded that the unfamiliar scripts were found to be the major factor of foreign language reading anxiety. Moreover, Sellers (2000) claimed that a negative correlation was found between anxiety and reading performance. If EFL reading abilities were not good enough in the process of reading the script, the readers will feel anxious. In the studies of Mirhassani and Hosseini (2006); Rahemi (2009), the students feel anxious while they are required to read texts in English because they are short of reading comprehension abilities.

### 2.4 Anxiety in Speaking

Speaking anxiety result from a number of different factors. In the studies of Kenneth and Melvin (2008); Hsu and Tsu-Chia (2011), many learners felt more nervous when they were on the stage, and were afraid of interacting with the audience. More

specifically, when the audience remains silent, the speaker became more anxious and forgot what they wanted to say. Moreover, another study has also shown that in foreign language classes, when students spoke front of teachers and classmates, they felt the most anxious, (Horwitz & Young, 1991). Similarly, a study in 2010 by Khairilzwan Abdullah and Nurul Lina at the Malaysian University of Science and Technology explored the anxiety experienced by students in speaking in a second language. The results showed that a majority of students experienced moderate levels of anxiety when they spoke in a target language. Lindy Woodrow (2006) indicated that the most common source of speaking anxiety is interaction with native speakers.

### 2.5 Teacher-related Anxiety

Studies in the past have shown instructor-related anxiety as a factor for EFL learning. In the process of having a communication with teachers, students are inclined to feel anxious during their conversations or meetings with their instructors. Liu (2006) indicated that students felt anxious the most is during a discussion with their teacher, and the better the degree, the less anxious the students are. In addition, Zhou Qizhen (2007) found that Gender was not a variable in terms of teacher anxiety. The result also indicated that female students had a higher interaction anxiety with their teacher compared with male students. Similarly, Hardré, Chen, Huang, Chiang Jen and Warden (2006) reported the more support students received from their instructor, the less anxious they felt about their teacher. (Frantzen & Magnan, 2005; Llinás & Garau 2009; Matsuda & Globe, 2004). In accordance to other findings, Assor, Kaplan, Kanat-Maymon and Roth (2005) found that teacher without encouragements would arouse students' anger and anxiety, thereby reducing learning motivation and learning outcomes.

## 3. Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology adopted to examine the attitude and anxiety level of English major college students toward graduation research writing projects, and to examine other variables related to language anxiety. First, the participants and the setting. Second, it proposes the instruments used in the study. Third, it explains the study procedures of administering the study and collecting the data needed. Finally, it discusses the use of quantitative and qualitative methods for data analysis.

### 3.1 Participants

There were recruited from the Department of Applied Foreign Languages at National Penghu University of Science and Technology. The researchers first recruited senior who majored in English and volunteered to take part in the survey study. He then selected the five interviewees for the interview from those who had already participated in the survey. There were 35 participants who volunteered to take part in

this study. They were asked to fill in a questionnaire regarding their anxiety and attitude toward the graduation research project (GRP). In addition, six of them were chosen for the interview. Interviewees all had different project instructors for the GRP and they were asked to share their opinions and thoughts on their own learning experiences from the GRP.

### 3.2 Instruments

The instruments included a questionnaire and a set of interview questions. The questionnaire was adopted and modified from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope (1986). It was employed to elicit the students' language anxiety in English and their second foreign language. As shown in Appendix B, the questionnaire consisted of 30 questions related to the anxiety and attitude of students toward GRP. The interview questions were designed to elicit the opinions of students toward GRP. In addition, the participants were given a consent form to indicate their willingness to take part in the study, and a form to provide their background information. Yan and Detaramani (2008) indicated that a questionnaire was the major approach adopted by the studies on language anxiety. Besides, Price (1991) claimed that interviews can be used to get the detailed description of the interviewees' experience as well as to examine some specific questions about the focus of research. The interview questions were adapted from those made by (Price 1991; Yan & Detaramani et al 2008). There a total of five interview questions. (See Appendix C).

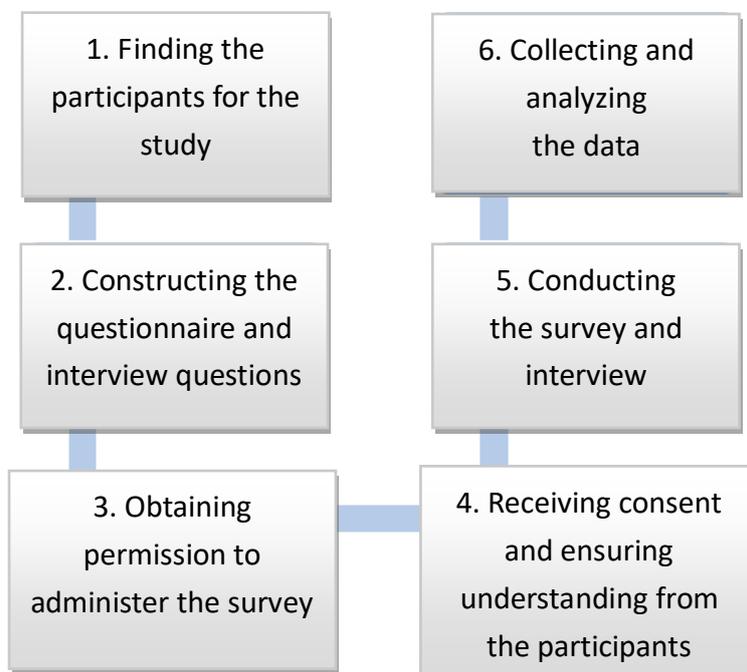
### 3.3 Study Procedures

With the teachers' permission, the researchers confirmed the date for administering the survey on June 4 and June 8 of 2019. Each student received a consent form and a questionnaire. Then, the researchers explained the purpose of the study and details about the questionnaire. The researcher guaranteed that all the information they offered would be kept confidential. Besides, their response to the questionnaire would not influence their grade in that class. A gift was offered as an incentive to sign up for the study. After the explanation, the researchers checked if all the students understood the purpose and process of the research. After signing the consent form for the study, the students continued to fill the questionnaire. They were given fifteen minutes to finish the questionnaire. After all the participants finished their questionnaire, the teacher of the class helped collect the questionnaires.

After collecting the data from the English Major senior students, the researchers randomly selected five participants from different GRP groups and instructors for the interview. The interviews were recorded with a digital recorder with the interviewees'

permission. Each interview lasted about eight minutes. After the interview, the data was transcribed and analyzed.

Figure 1. Study Procedures



### 3.4 Data Analysis

After the data was collected and coded, the Excel software was used for the data to be computed and analyzed, including the participants' demographic information, self-perceived English proficiency, Second Foreign Language Anxiety Scale, and self-perceived second foreign language proficiency. Finally, we found out the relationship between the students' English and second foreign language anxiety and the perceived proficiency of language skills. The results were analyzed and presented in Chapter Four.

## 4. Result and Discussion

This chapter presents the statistical analyses of the quantitative data and the results of the qualitative data with regard to the students' language anxiety when they undergo the process of graduation research project (GRP). The first section reports the three variables that might affect the level of language anxiety: the instructor, the use of foreign language skills, and the process of conducting an academic research. Finally, in addition to the statistical data, the researcher also obtains the qualitative data from the transcription of an interview.

#### 4.1 Analysis of research question 1

*What is the anxiety level of English majored university students toward the instructor, language use, and research tasks?*

The statistical analyses pertaining to the first research question which was proposed in this study revealed that the participants hold a fairly anxiety towards the GRP. To be specific, the results of question 1 revealed that 37% of the participants found they felt anxious when they had face-to-face communication with their project instructor and 40% of them believed they did not feel anxious during face-to-face communication with the instructor. Next, in question 3, 53% of the participants reported that they felt anxious when the teacher's ideas and instructions were not clear and only 13% of them did not feel anxious regarding this issue.

Figure 2. Student Anxiety toward Face-to-Face Meetings with Project Instructor

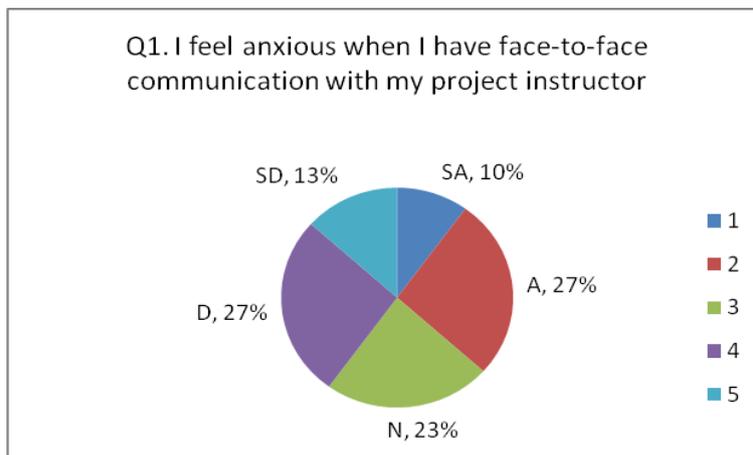
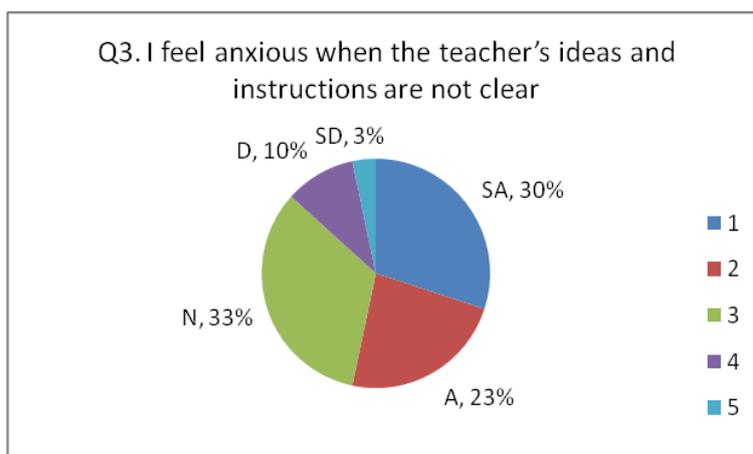


Figure 3. Student Anxiety toward Instructor's Unclear Ideas and Instructions



In question 6 revealed that 37% of the participants found they felt anxious when they could not find international journals due to the lack of English vocabularies. 37% of them believed they did not feel anxious when they could not find international

journals due to the lack of English vocabularies. Next, in question 10, 33% of the participants reported that they felt anxious when they had so much information that they could not organize them, and only 37% of them felt not anxious regarding this issue.

Figure 4. Student Anxiety toward the Inability to Find International Journals.

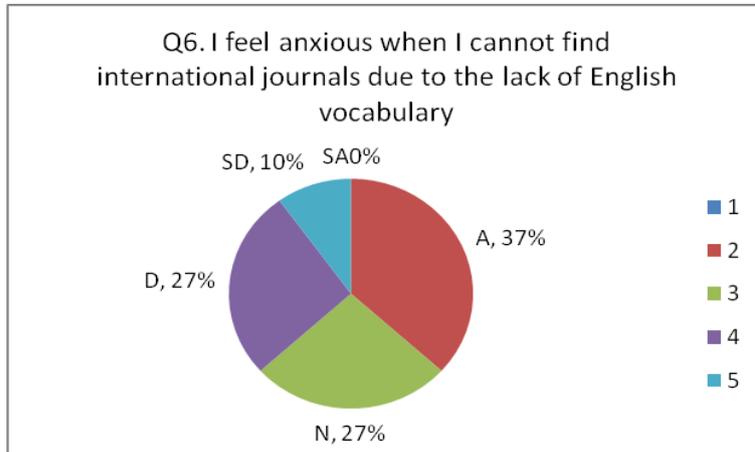
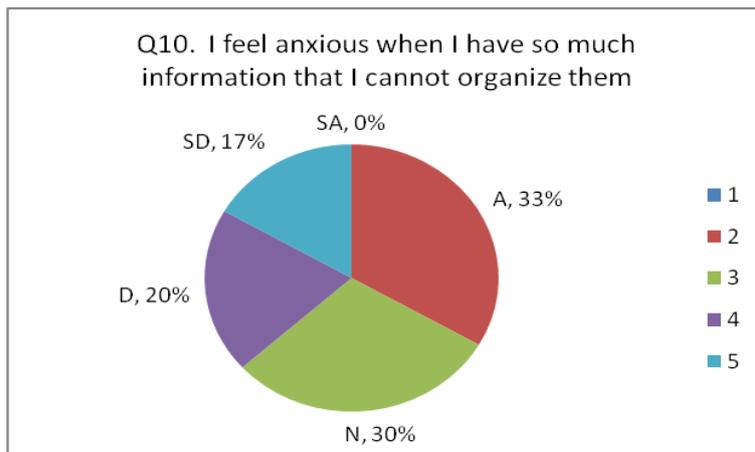


Figure 5. Student Anxiety toward the Inability to Organize Information.



In question 18 revealed that 50% of the participants found they felt anxious when they thought about a speech was coming up. 23% of them believed they did not feel anxious when they thought about a speech was coming up. Next, in question 19, 43% of the participants reported that they felt anxious during an important presentation, they experienced a feeling of helplessness built up inside them. Only 37% of them did not feel anxious during an important presentation, they experience a feeling of helplessness built up inside them.

Figure 6. Student Anxiety toward Upcoming Speech.

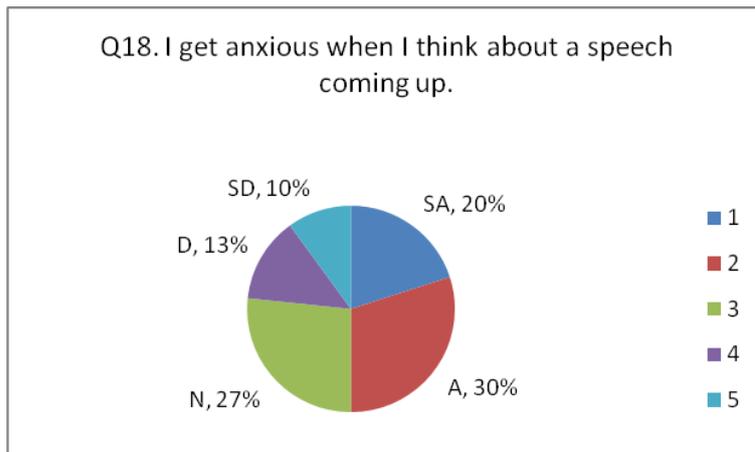
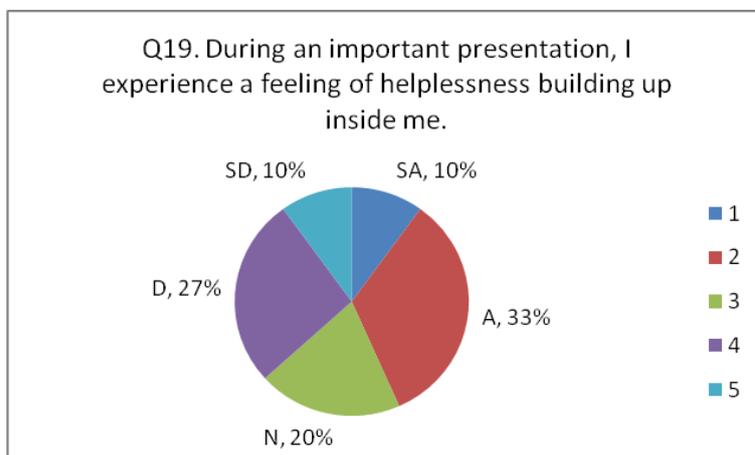


Figure 7. Student Anxiety during a Presentation.



#### 4.2 Analysis of research question 2

*What is the attitude of English majored university students toward graduation project research writing?*

The statistical analyses pertaining to the second research question which was proposed in this study revealed that the participants held a highly positive attitude towards GRP. The results of question 21 revealed that 70% of the participants found if they were confused, they would like to ask an instructor for help as possible as they could. 40% of them believed they did not feel anxious. If they were confused, they would like to ask an instructor for help as possible as they can. Next, in question 25, 66% of the participants reported that they thought they had improved their research and language after the courses and practices. Only 10% of them did not feel anxious. They thought they had improved their research and language after the courses and practices. Finally, in question 26 revealed that 63% of the participants found they thought the training from the courses were practical and could be applied to their

future research.17% of them believed they did not feel anxious. They thought the training from the courses were practical and could be applied to their future research.

Figure 8. Student Attitude toward Instructor Aid

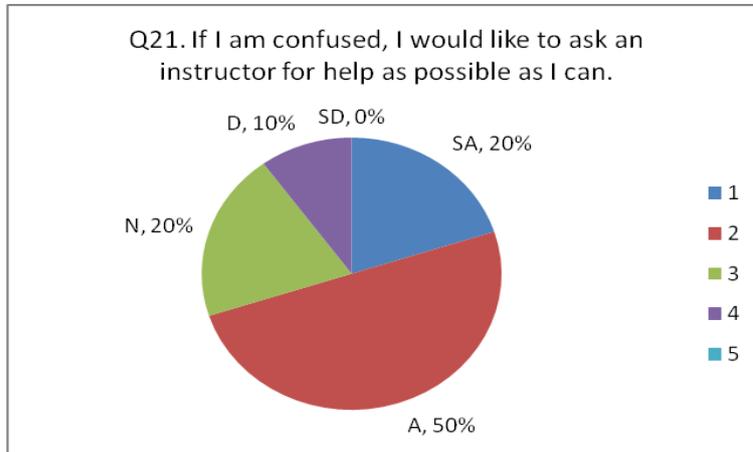


Figure 9. Student Attitude toward Their Improvements

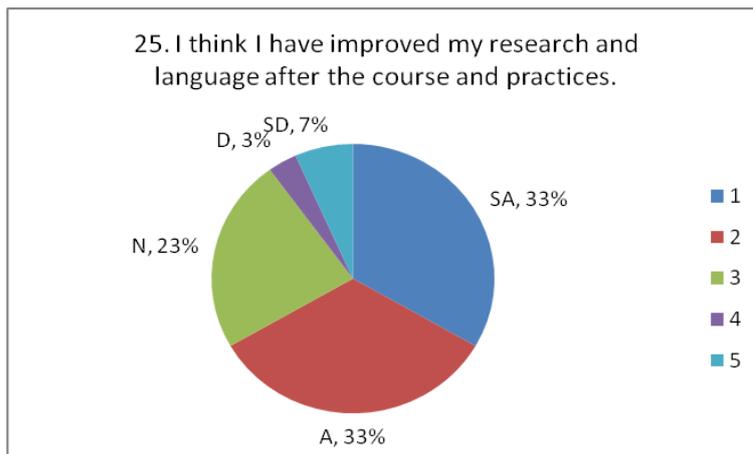
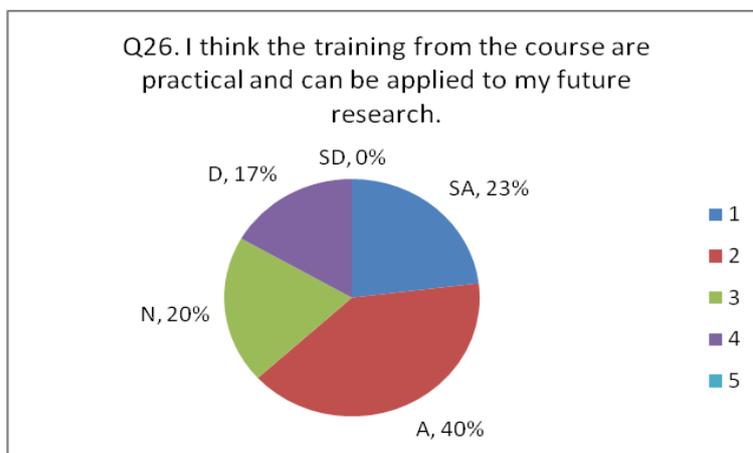


Figure 10. Student Attitude toward the Training Course



### 4.3 Interview Result

Besides the questionnaire, an interview was used to elucidate the participants' responses toward the results of the questionnaire and reveal the students' inner thoughts. There were six interview questions used to examine (1) *During the course of your project writing, what kind of assistance did your instructor provide?* (2) *In your opinion, what is the main cause for your anxiety during this project writing task?* (3) *Do you think that the English courses offered by the department were effective and sufficient for you to handle your project? If not enough? Which part do you think is not enough?* (4) *After finishing the project, which parts of your English skills do you think need to be strengthened?* (5) *How do you feel about the graduation requirement writing project? What kind of suggestions do you have to improve this type of course?* A number of significant findings were also found in the oral interviews. The following excerpts helped triangulate the data. In question 1 of the interview, three of the learners explained:

*"We did not know how to operate SPSS, so the teacher asked someone else to do it for us. Also, the teacher gave us a research project that was already half-finished and wanted us to continue from there"* (Student A, interviewed).

*"Most of this project was not written by us; instead, our teacher did most of the writing because our performance was considered not good enough. Our job was to conduct the survey and look for relevant papers"* (Student C, interviewed).

*"I think the journal papers that our teacher gave us to organize for the literature review were not even used in our research project. Also, our teacher used very extreme approaches to force us to complete the project when time was running out."* (Student B, interviewed).

*"Our instructor gave us clear directions and showed us the structuring and every steps and details of our research from the beginning. Besides, the instructor guided us how to apply the correct method to look for relevant data."* (Student E, interviewed).

*"Our instructor helped us revise our writing and prepare for the oral presentation with patience. After our oral presentation, our instructor continued to provide detailed suggestions to help us finish the revision."* (Student D, interviewed).

The following excerpts helped triangulate the data. In question 2 of the interview, three of the learners explained:

*“We often had difficulties communicating because the instructor’s directions were often inconsistent and ambiguous, which made us very anxious ”*  
(Student A, interviewed).

*“The instructor often did not give us enough time to complete the research assignments. Hence, we, although completed the assignment, did not put of our true efforts at all.”* (Student B, interviewed).

*“We were unable to communicate with our instructor because the instructor was unwilling to adopt our ideas and suggestions without giving us any explanations, which made us extremely anxious. What’s more, I was unable to comprehend when the teacher used Taiwanese to communicate with us. ”* (Student C, interviewed).

*“My anxiety mainly came from my group member, not the instructor. I think one of the member’s frequent absence, lack of participation, and subjectivity seriously increased my anxiety level and also hindered the progression of our project.*  
(Student D, interviewed).

*“I did not have much anxiety from the GRP.”* (Student E, interviewed).

The following excerpts helped triangulate the data. In question 3 of the interview, four of the learners explained:

*“No, it’s not enough. The instructors should teach the students how to use the survey system before we conduct the survey.”* (Student A, interviewed).

*“We are not good at reading, so the department should add more reading courses.”*  
(Student B, interviewed).

*“The SPSS course taught in the department is not useful, so the department should make improvements in this regard.”* (Student C, interviewed).

*“Our department offers a few helpful and relevant courses but it’s still not enough.”*  
(Student D, interviewed).

The following excerpts helped triangulate the data. In question 4 of the interview, three of the learners explained:

*“My vocabulary repertoire needs expanding because it is necessary to translate the entire article into Chinese in order to understand the literature.” (Student A, interviewed).*

*“I should improve vocabulary and grammar.” (Student C, interviewed).*

*“I lack English listening and speaking skills.” (Student D, interviewed).*

The following excerpts helped triangulate the data. In question 5 of the interview, three of the learners explained:

*“I believe that the GRP is not necessary.” (Student A, interviewed).*

*I don't think GRP is necessary. Instead, I think our graduation requirement for students' language proficiency should be set higher.” “What's more, although reading journal papers could help us improve our reading skills, I still prefer learning something more colloquial and practical.” (Student B, interviewed).*

*“I believe that the GRP is necessary; however, I think the teachers must be trained on how to properly instruct us. Also, there should be more relevant courses offered.” (Student C, interviewed).*

*“The GRP is essential. It is a benchmark and assessment to evaluate what we have learned in the four years of college.” (Student D, interviewed).*

*“I consider the GRP a necessary process and experience. Another alternative is to have a graduation exam.” (Student E, interviewed).*

## **5. Conclusion**

On the basis of the data analyses, findings, and discussion in Chapter Four, this chapter summarizes the overall results in the present study. This study was conducted to examine the majored university students toward graduation research project (GRP). Based on the questionnaire, there were three categories about the anxiety level: instructor, research tasks, language use. First, when it comes to the instructor, we found that the majority of students felt anxious about the topic teacher's work

instructions and ideas was not clear, and the minority of students felt anxious when topic teacher used English. In terms of research tasks, the statistical results indicated that most of the students felt anxious to search the international journals. Furthermore, the students' learning anxiety increased because they were incapable of finding the relevant literatures. As for language use, the finding also revealed that the majority of students got so nervous that they forgot what they wanted to say, while making a speech, and the minority of students got anxious when they thought about a speech coming up. The second question was to explore the attitude of English majored university students toward graduation project research writing. The statistical analyses pertaining to the second research question revealed that the participants held a highly positive attitude towards the GRP. According to our questionnaire, we found two important findings related to the attitude for the instructor and GRP training course. First, we found that the majority of students, when they were confused, they would like to ask an instructor for help as possible as they could. On the contrary, the minority of students think the instruction from the teacher is clear and easy to understand. Second, we found that the majority of the students thought that they had improved their research and language after the training course and practices. In contrary, the minority of students thought the contents of the courses were too easy for English major university students. The above four categories, students had the highest level of anxiety when it comes to the attitude, whereas the lowest student anxiety occurred in the research tasks.

Based on the five interview questions, the major findings of the present study are summarized as follows. First, among the five interviewees, two claimed to have received academic assistance from the instructor. The other three reported that they received scarce aid from the instructor. In terms of the factors of anxiety, three out of five interviewees reported that most of their anxiety originated from the instructor. However, it is interested to note that one interviewee claimed that the anxiety came from the group members, whereas the other one had little to no anxiety. As for the language skills, all of the interviewees felt a strong need to improve their English reading and writing skills. Lastly, three interviewees reported that GRP is necessary for university students. On the contrary, two interviewees claimed that GRP is not practical for the real world tasks.

### 5.1 Pedagogical Implications

Based on the findings mentioned previously, the researchers suggest few pedagogical implications for English majored students at National Penghu University. First, the findings of this study can assist the EFL instructors and students on educational aspects in the future. For the instructors, they should be more aware of the possible

causes of learner anxiety. Identification of learner anxiety can help instructors to adjust their teaching methods and materials in order to minimize the problems and increase learning effectiveness and efficiency. In addition to academic contributions, the study findings can also guide future scholars to make more in-depth research on anxiety related topics.

### 5.2 Limitations of the Study

There are two limitations of the current study that need to be addressed with care. To begin with, the results of this study are not applicable to all students, since the participants were recruited from the Department of English at a technological university in Penghu, the findings may not be able to represent all English majors in Taiwan. Replicating this research in other universities in Taiwan may generate different results. As a result, further scholar needs to include more participants from different schools in different regions. Then, our questionnaires are only thirty, so our reliability is few. We suggest research can distribute more questionnaires to increase reliability of research.

### 5.3 Suggestions for Future Research

Since the number of our participants is relatively small; thus, it is not possible to generalize the findings of this study. However, for future research, we suggests that researchers explore anxiety for student learning further, by conducting interdepartmental or multi-school research. Moreover, future scholars should research on EFL instructor anxiety to investigate teacher anxiety level in the classroom to find a feasible solution to improve teaching quality and also enhance teaching efficiency.

## Reference

Aida, Y. (1994). Examination of Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope's construct of foreign language anxiety: The case of students of Japanese. *Modern Language Journal*, 78, 155-168.

Alpert, R., & Haber, R. N. (1960). Anxiety in Academic Achievement Situations. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 61, 207-215.

Assor, A., Kaplan, H., Kanat-Maymon, Y., & Roth, G. (2005). Directly controlling teacher behaviors as predictors of poor motivation and engagement in girls and boys: The role of anger and anxiety. *Learning and Instruction*, 15, 397-413.

Bailey, K.M. (1983). Competitiveness and anxiety in adult second language learning: looking at and through the diary studies. In H.W. Seliger and M.H. Long (Eds.). *Classroom Oriented Research in Second Languages*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House. 67-103.

Onwuegbuzie, A. J., Bailey, P., & Daley, C. E. (1999). Factors associated with foreign language anxiety. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 20(2), 217-239

Cheng, Y.S. (2002). Factors associated with foreign language writing anxiety. *Foreign Language Annuals*, vol. 35, no. 5, pp. 647-56.

Daly, J. (1991). Understanding communication apprehension: An introduction for language educators. In E. K. Horwitz, & D. J. Young (Eds.), *Language anxiety: From theory and research to classroom implications* (pp.3-14). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Dornyei, Z. (1998) Motivation in Second and Foreign Language Learning. *Language Teaching*, 31, 117-135.

Ehrman, M. E., & Oxford, R. L. (1995). Cognition Plus: Correlates of Language Learning Success. *Modern Language Journal*, 79, 67-89.

Ellis, R. (1994). A theory of instructed second language acquisition. In N. Ellis (Ed.), *Implicit and explicit learning of languages*. Academic Press.

Ewald, J. D. (2007). Foreign Language Learning Anxiety in Upper-Level Classes: Involving Students as Researchers. *Foreign Language Annals*, 40, 122-142.

Frantzen, D., & Magnan, S. (2005). Anxiety and the true beginner-false beginner dynamic in beginning French and Spanish classes. *Foreign Language Annals*, 38, 171-186. doi: 10.1111/j.1944-9720.2005.tb02483.x

Ganschow, L., Sparks, R., Anderson, R., Javorsky, J., Skinner, S. & Patton, J. (1994). Differences in anxiety and language performance among high- and low-anxious college foreign language learners. *Modern Language Journal*, 78, 41–55.

Ganschow, L. & Sparks, R. (1995). Effects of direct instruction in Spanish phonology on the native language skills and foreign language aptitude of at-risk foreign language learners. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 28, 107–20.

Gardner, R. C. & MacIntyre, P. D. (1991). An instrumental motivation in language study: Who says it isn't effective. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 13, 57-72.

Grandage, K. K., Slawson, D. C., & Shaughnessy, A. F. (2002). When less is more: A practical approach to searching for evidence-based answers. *Journal of the Medical Library Association*, 90(3), 298-304.

Gregersen, T. (2003). To err is human: A reminder to teachers of language-anxious students. *Foreign Language Annals*, 36, 25–32.

Hamouda, A. (2013). An Investigation of Listening Comprehension Problems Encountered by Saudi Students in the EL. Listening Classroom. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*. 2(2), 113-155.

Hardré, Chen, Huang, Chiang Jen & Warden.(2006).The Research on the Relationship of Technology University Students' English Learning Belief, Learning Climate, Learning Anxiety and Learning Effectiveness.

Horwitz, C. (1990). Total quality management: an approach for education. *Educational Management and Administration*, 18 (2): 55-58.

Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70, 125-132.

Horwitz, E. K. & Young, D. J. (1991). *Language Anxiety: From Theory and Research to Classroom Implications*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Horwitz, E.K. (2001). Language anxiety and achievement. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 21, 112– 126.

Horwitz, R. (2000). It ain't over until it's over: On foreign language anxiety, first language deficits, and the confounding of variables. *Modern Language Journal*, 84, 256–259

Javorsky, J., Sparks, R. & Ganschow, L. (1992). Perceptions of college students with and without specific learning disabilities about foreign language courses. *Learning Disabilities: Research and Practice*, 7, 31–44.

Kenneth, E., & Melvin, R. (2008). Foreign language anxiety in Japanese EFL university classes: Cause, coping, and locus of control. *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, 5(2), 181-191.

Khairi A., & Nurul R. (2010). A study on second language Speaking anxiety among UTM students. (From)  
[http://www.researchgate.net/publication/46212069\\_A\\_Study\\_On\\_Second\\_Language\\_Speaking\\_Anxiety\\_Among\\_UTM\\_Students](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/46212069_A_Study_On_Second_Language_Speaking_Anxiety_Among_UTM_Students) Retrieved 30 July 2012.

Kim, J.-H. (2000). Foreign language listening anxiety: A study of Korean students learning English. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Texas, Austin.

Kitano, K. (2001). Anxiety in the college Japanese language classroom. *Modern Lang. J.* 85:549-566.

Lee, J. F. (1999). Clashes in L2 Reading: Research Versus Practice and Readers' Misconceptions. In Young, D. J. (Ed.) (1999). *Affect in Foreign Language and Second Language Learning: A Practical Guide to Creating a Low-Anxiety Classroom Atmosphere*, pp. 49-63.

Liu, M. H. (2006). Anxiety in Chinese EFL students at different proficiency levels. *System*, 34, 301-316.

MacIntyre, P. D. & Gardner, R. C. (1989). Anxiety and second-language learning: Toward a theoretical clarification. *Language Learning*, 39, 251-275.

MacIntyre, P. D. & Gardner, R. C. (1991). Language anxiety: Its relation to other anxieties and to processing in native and second languages. *Language Learning*, 41, 513-534.

MacIntyre, P. (1995a). How does anxiety affect second language learning? A reply to Sparks and Ganschow. *Modern Language Journal*, 79, 90-9.

MacIntyre, P. (1995b). On seeing the forest and the trees: A rejoinder to Sparks and Ganschow. *Modern Language Journal*, 79, 245-8.

McCroskey, J. C. (1970). Measures of communication-bound anxiety. *Speech Monographs*, 37, 269-277.

Mirhassani, S. A., & Hosseini, S. M. H. (2006). The effect of competitive team-based learning on reading comprehension of Iranian senior high school students. *Roshd FLT Journal*, 20(77), 42-49.

Onwuegbuzie, A., Bailey, P., & Daley, C. (2000). Cognitive, Affective, Personality and Demographic Predictors of Foreign Language Achievement. *Journal of Educational Research*, 94, 3-15.

Oxford, R. (1999). Anxiety and the Language Learner: New Insights. In J. Arnold (Ed.), *Affect in Language Learning* (pp. 58-67). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Oxford, R.L., (1999b): Relationships between learning strategy use and language proficiency in the context of learner autonomy and self-regulation. In L. Bobb (Ed.), *Learner Autonomy as a Central Concept of Foreign Language Learning*, Special Issue of *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses*, 38, 109-126.

Pichette, F. (2009). Second Language Anxiety and Distance Language Learning, *Foreign Language Annals*, 42(1), 77-93

Price, M. L. (1991). The subjective experience of foreign language anxiety: Interviews with highly anxious students. In E. K. Horwitz & D. J. Young (Eds.), *Language anxiety: From theory and research to classroom implications* (pp. 101–108). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Rachman, S. (1998). *Clinical psychology: A modular course. Anxiety*. Hove, England: Psychology Press/Erlbaum (UK) Taylor & Francis.

Rodriguez, M., Abreu, O., 2003. The stability of general foreign language classroom anxiety across English and French. *The Modern Language Journal* 87 (3), 365–374.

Saito, Y., Horwitz, E. K. & Garza, T. J. (1999). Foreign language reading anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 83(2), 202-218.

Scovel, T. (1978). The effect of anxiety on foreign language learning: A review of the anxiety research. *Language Learning*, 28, 128-142.

Sellars, V. (2000). Anxiety and reading comprehension in Spanish as a foreign language. *Foreign Language Annals*, 33(5), 512-521.

Shahi, M. (2016). The impact of e-learning on improving Iranian EFL learners' language skills: decreasing learning anxiety. *Journal of Fundamental and Applied Sciences*, 8, 261-275.

Sparks, R.L. & Ganschow, L. (1993a). The impact of native language learning problems on foreign language learning: case study illustrations of the linguistic coding deficit hypothesis. *Modern Language Journal*, 77, 58-74.

Spielberger, C. D. (1983) *Manual for the State-Trait Anxiety (From Y)*. Consulting Psychologists Press, Palo Alto, CA

Spielmann, G., & Radnofsky, M. L. (2001). Learning language under tension: New directions from a qualitative study. *The Modern Language Journal*, 85, 259-278.

Tanveer , Muhammad .( 2007) ,, Investigation of the factors that cause language anxiety for ESL/EFL learners in learning speaking skills and the influence it casts on communication in the target language“. Unpublished Thesis, Faculty of Education, university of Glasgow.

Woodrow, L.J. 2001 Towards a Model of Adaptive Language Learning: A Pilot Study (ERIC Documents, ED456645). 2003 'A Model of Adaptive Learning of International English for Academic Purposes (EAP) at Australian Universities' (Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Sydney).

Yan, J. X., & Detaramani, C. (2008). A comparison of language anxiety in English and Mandarin Learning in Hong Kong. *English Teaching & Learning*, 32(1), 45-85.

Young, D. J. (1991). Creating a low-anxiety classroom environment: What does language anxiety research suggest? *The Modern Language Journal*, 75, 426-439.

Young, D. J. (1992). Language anxiety from the foreign language specialist's perspective: Interviews with Krashen, Omaggio Hadley, Terrell, and Rardin. *Foreign Language Annals* 25, 157-172.

Zheng, Y. (2008). Anxiety and Second/Foreign Language Learning. *Canadian Journal for New Scholars in Education*, 1(1), pp. 1-12.

崔斐韻 (2004)。大學生資訊焦慮與因應方式之研究—以南部地區為例 (未發表之碩士論文)。國立高雄師範大學，高雄市。

周啟葶 (2007)。高中生英語自我效能、英語學習焦慮、英語學習策略與英語學習成就關係之研究(博士論文)。

**Appendix A**  
**(Background Information)**

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_
2. ID number: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Class: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Gender: Male    Female
5. Senior high school/Vocational high school and major: \_\_\_\_\_
6. How long have you been learning English: \_\_\_\_\_ years?
7. Have you learned English at cram schools:  
 Yes     No    If yes, for how long? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Frequency of using English:  usually     often     sometimes     seldom  
 never
9. Have you traveled to or lived in English-speaking countries:  
 Yes     No    If yes, for how long? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Have you studied in English-speaking countries :  
 Yes     No    If yes, for how long? \_\_\_\_\_
11. The second foreign language you are learning in school :  
 Japanese  
 German
12. How long have you been learning the second foreign language \_\_\_\_\_  
years?
13. Have you learned the second foreign language at cram schools :  
 Yes     No    If yes, for how long? \_\_\_\_\_
14. Frequency of using the second foreign language :  
 usually     often     sometimes     seldom     never
15. Have you traveled to or lived in your second-foreign-language-speaking  
countries :  
 Yes     No    If yes, for how long? \_\_\_\_\_
16. Have you studied in your second-foreign-language-speaking countries :  
 Yes     No    If yes, for how long? \_\_\_\_\_
17. Have you ever taken the TOEIC proficiency test before?  
 Yes  No    If yes, what's the score? \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

### (Questionnaire for Anxiety and Attitude)

Item	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. I feel anxious when I have face-to-face communication with my project instructor	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2. I feel anxious when the teacher does not give us enough time to finish our assignments	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3. I feel anxious when the teacher's ideas and instructions are not clear	<input type="checkbox"/>				
4. I feel anxious when the teacher uses more English than Mandarin in the group meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>				
5. I feel anxious when I cannot obtain the FULL-text for the literature review	<input type="checkbox"/>				
6. I feel anxious when I cannot find international journals due to the lack of English vocabulary	<input type="checkbox"/>				
7. I feel anxious because I am incapable of finding the relevant literatures	<input type="checkbox"/>				
8. I feel anxious when I am uncertain whether the journal papers I find correspond to our writing topic	<input type="checkbox"/>				
9. I feel anxious when I encounter organizational problems due to my poor computer skills	<input type="checkbox"/>				
10. I feel anxious when I have so much information that I cannot organize them	<input type="checkbox"/>				
11. Due to the lack of English vocabulary, I feel anxious when I read the international journals	<input type="checkbox"/>				
12. During the process of reading international journals, I feel anxious because of the lack of reading skills.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
13. During the process of writing, I feel anxious because of the lack of grammar knowledge.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
14. During the process of writing, I feel anxious because of the lack of writing skills.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
15. During the process of writing, I feel anxious because of the lack of vocabulary.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
16. While preparing for the final presentation, I feel tense and nervous.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

17. While making a speech, I get so nervous I forget facts I really know.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
18. I get anxious when I think about a speech coming up.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
19. During an important presentation, I experience a feeling of helplessness building up inside me.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
20. I look forward to making the final presentation about our project writing topic.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
21. If I am confused, I would like to ask an instructor for help as possible as I can.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
22. I think I still need to have an instructor to facilitate my learning when I organize the methodologies.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
23. I think the instruction from the teacher is clear and easy to understand.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
24. I think the interaction between instructor and student provide additional practice for strengthening my research skills.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
25. I think I have improved my research and language after the course and practices.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
26. I think the trainings from the course are practical and can be applied to my future research.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
27. I think this project learning experience have been enjoyable and informative.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
28. I think I am greatly motivated by this project courses and feel my English is improving little by little.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
29. I think the discussion with teacher are effective and enhance my learning motivation.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
30. I think the contents of the courses are too easy for English major university students.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

\*SA = strongly agree, A = agree, N = neither agree nor disagree, D = disagree, SD = strongly disagree.

**Appendix C**  
**(Interview Question)**

- (1) During the course of your project writing, what kind of assistance did your instructor provide?
- (2) In your opinion, what is the main cause for your anxiety during this project writing task?
- (3) Do you think that the English courses offered by the department were effective and sufficient for you to handle your project? If not enough? Which part do you think is not enough?
- (4) After finishing the project, which parts of your English skills do you think need to be strengthened?
- (5) How do you feel about the graduation requirement writing project? What kind of suggestions do you have to improve this type of course?